

Iowa SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL

Annual Report 2006 - 07



VISION STATEMENT

All children in Iowa, as members of communities, shall receive opportunities and needed supports for meaningful lives and quality education experiences.

(2007)

State of Iowa
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Grimes State Office Building
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

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SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY PANEL

MISSION STATEMENT

The Iowa Special Education Advisory Panel serves as a resource to advise the Iowa Department of Education on behalf of all children with special needs and their families. This Panel engages in dialogue regarding philosophies and policies, including best practices and special education compliance that result in successful outcomes for persons with disabilities. (2007)

PURPOSE:

“To provide policy guidance with respect to special education and related services for children with disabilities.”

DUTIES:

- a) Advise State education agency on unmet needs;
- b) Comment publicly on any rules and regulations proposed by the State;
- c) Advise State education agency (SEA) in developing evaluations and reporting data to the U.S. Department of Education Secretary under section 618 of the Act;
- d) Advise SEA in developing corrective action plans to address findings identified in federal monitoring reports under Part B of this Act;
- e) Advise SEA in developing and implementing policies relating to the coordination of services.

34 C.F.R. §300.169 (2006)

2006-2007 MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Panel consists of representatives from both public and private sectors who, by virtue of their position, interest, and training, can contribute to the education of children with disabilities. A majority (51%) of the members of the Panel must be individuals with disabilities or parents of children with disabilities. The Director of the Department of Education (DE) appoints members of the Advisory Panel.

Executive Committee:

Patrick Clancy – Chair (Urban Education Network)

Jon Muller – Vice-Chair (Juvenile Corrections)

Lana Michelson – Bureau Chief (DE Bureau of Children, Family, and Community Services)

Diane Moore – Panel Facilitator (DE)

Panel Members:

MEMBER	ROLE
Kyla Alba	Parent of child with a disability
Erik Anderson	Parent Educator Connection Individual with a disability
Susan Benson-Blaine	Parent of child with a disability
Maria Cashman	Area Education Agency Special Education Director
Jim Chesnik	State welfare agency responsible for foster care
Lucy Evans	Parent of child with a disability School administrator
Diana Gonzalez	Board of Regents
Vicki Goshon	Parent of child with a disability Teacher
Paul Greene	Parent of child with a disability
Tyler Greene	Student
Allen Harris	Individual with a disability
Megen Johnson	Alternate
Renay Hauswirth	Parent of child with a disability
Chuck Hinz	Post-Secondary/Community Colleges
Jessica Iverson	Teacher – special education
Julie Jensen	Local Official-Homeless Assistance Act Administrator of Programs for Children with Disabilities
Nancy Kucera	Adult Correctional Facilities
Michelle Laughlin	Individual with a disability Institute of Higher Education

MEMBER	ROLE
David Mitchell	Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Lori Moore	Parent Training and Information Center of Iowa
Leon Mulford	Parent of child with a disability Elementary Principal
Jule Reynolds	Parent of child with a disability
W. Ray Richardson	Superintendent - Retired
Beth Rydberg	Protection & Advocacy Parent of child with a disability
LaShell Staley	Parent of child with a disability
Warren Steinbrueck	Parent of child with a disability
Susan Stock	Parent of child with a disability Teacher
Jim Stumme	Area Education Agency, Associate Director
Dottie Van Hooser	Private Schools Parent of child with a disability
Chris Wilson	Parent of child with a disability

Panel Staff:

Susan White – Panel Secretary (DE)

Dennis Dykstra – Administrative Consultant (DE)

Annual Priorities

Priorities:

1. To collaborate with the Department of Education and others to develop and refine strategies that ensures a comprehensive system of personnel development.
2. To promote a comprehensive and coordinated service delivery and funding system including the areas of mental health and transition services.

Key Activities and Accomplishments

The following activities were the **primary emphases** for panel members in the past year. The information reflects panel involvement and responsiveness to state issues and public concerns.

The Special Education Advisory Panel is Iowa's main stakeholder group reviewing Part B of the Six Year State Performance Plan (SPP). In September Lana reviewed all twenty indicators for the Panel. Panel members were asked to sign up for two indicators in which they had some interest. Each member examined those indicators, reviewed the data and reports, then provided comments about what the data said for 2005 – 06 and compared that to the desired outcome. The Panel then discussed recommended activities for improvement. The following indicators were primary areas of focus:

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Indicator 8: Parent Survey –measures parent involvement as measured by the percent of parents with a child receiving special education services who report that schools facilitated parent involvement as a means of improving services and results for children with disabilities. The surveys have been developed and piloted. The Panel was asked to examine the data analysis using two methodologies – The Kentucky-Virginia Method and Wisconsin Method.

After reviewing both methods, the Panel consensus was to use the Kentucky-Virginia method in Iowa. Additionally the Panel recommended setting the 6-year target at 8% level of growth. In discussing how the surveys were conducted, the Panel offered the following recommendations:

- Have a description of how the survey data will be used.
- When placing phone calls, leave messages or follow-up for parents who may be screening their incoming calls.
- Send out postcards notifying parents of when to expect a phone call.
- At each Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting give the option to parents at that time to complete the survey.

OSEP Indicators 13 and 14: Transition Issues

Only five percent of the state's Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) had transition components in place that meet Iowa's standards. Iowa requires that each of six critical elements must be present in the transition plan for students, ages 14 (federal age is 16) and older for an IEP to be considered meeting Indicator 13 which states: *“Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and*

transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals.”

These elements are:

1. Interests and Preferences
2. Transition Assessments
3. Post-Secondary Expectations
4. Course of Study
5. Annual Goals
6. Services, supports and activities

Additional data demonstrated that transition assessments were the areas of greatest concern. The Panel agreed the state should communicate a consistent message of the expectations to local and area education agencies and be responsible to provide the tools and resources for each Area Education Agency and Local Education Agency (AEA/LEA). The Panel will be updated on the data annually to review the progress.

OSEP Indicator 4: Suspension/Expulsion

The Panel reviewed the baseline data and was asked to affirm or change the targets for Indicator 4b, which measures the percent of districts with significant discrepancy of 2% above state average by race and ethnicity. The Panel affirmed the targets be kept as rigorous as those for Indicator 4a, which measures overall suspensions/expulsions without regard to race and ethnicity.

Workshops to the Panel

In order to fulfill their role of advising the DE on special education issues, Panel members felt they needed to stay current on key aspects of the special education system in Iowa. During the year, DE staff involved with specific programs or projects was invited to present to the Panel. Members were frequently asked to provide feedback or make recommendations for specific issues discussed. Following is a brief synopsis of workshops and panel response during this past year. Panel members have a commitment to being well informed on issues related to the above referenced outcomes and to monitor the related data. The following section includes some of the key special education data reviewed by the Panel.

1. Bureau Updates with Lana Michelson

An important item on every agenda included the Bureau Chief Lana Michelson's update of current initiatives at the DE. This feature kept Panel members current with workings of the Bureau staff; national, state and AEA initiatives and policy changes; trends in special/general education; legislation; and current issues. Examples of updates included:

- Staff vacancies and introduction of new staff members
- WESTAT visit to review Iowa's data collection and monitoring systems
- Iowa students with disabilities enrolled in accredited nonpublic schools
- Medicaid funds available for school districts
- Iowa's Alternate Assessment system
- State legislation and the Governor's budget offer process [4-year-old preschool and Early ACCESS (the birth to 3 year old services or Part C)]
- Special education compliance and monitoring
- Federal Regulations and process to update state regulations
- Early Childhood Outcomes change in rating scale

2. Panel Member Updates/Experiences/Outreach

Panel members reported on their experiences attending national and state level conferences and workshops. Sharing included the benefits for Panel members and notices of other conferences and learning opportunities for Panel members.

3. Legal Updates with Thomas Mayes, Bureau Legal Consultant

Updates included:

- Review of the process for revision of Iowa's Rules for Special Education and solicitation of Panel and individual comments for the revision
- Discussion of a study of Iowa's Special Education Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) system and the plan for on-going inservice training of ALJs
- Regular updates about due process hearings, settlements, and court cases

4. IDEA '04 Update: Dennis Dykstra

High Needs Risk Pool: IDEA '04 allows for funds to be set aside for expensive high need students. With IDEA '04, 1% of federal dollars will be set-aside for these students. The total amount is just over one million dollars. School districts will have to use up all state and local dollars first and then draw down the high-risk dollars. A possible scenario: districts pay the first \$30,000, then those districts spending over this amount may ask for additional money, which will ease their financial burden. The program will be evaluated each year to see if the set aside money is adequate for the high needs risk pool.

Early Intervening Services: IDEA '04 allows an LEA to use not more than 15% of the amount it receives to develop and implement coordinated early intervening services. In the state of Iowa an LEA is our AEA. The DE is working hard to consistently apply the concepts of AEA vs. school district in the IDEA language. Four years ago AEAs started allocating a share of their Part B dollars to their constituent school districts. AEAs are limited to 15% of their Part B dollars to early intervening services and the Department will develop a policy and procedure to ensure this "limiting" language is being met.

5. Special Education Finance with Steve Crew and Dennis Dykstra

Steve presented an update of Special Education finance. In December the State Budget Review Committee (SBRC) discussed the distribution of special education weightings across the state and looked at weights in relation to the Special Education budget. Last year's negative balance was \$31.5 million dollars, which was an approximate increase of 50% in one year. Because of this large amount, the special education financial records of 18 districts were reviewed. The sample of the districts chosen for review included six with the highest negative balance, six with highest positive balance, and six that had the highest negative increase from the prior year. All 18 districts had completed the information inaccurately. After calculating and correcting the mistakes, the negative balance dropped to \$18.5 million dollars, which is a 43% reduction. Steve Crew has presented workshops to help all school districts be more knowledgeable about the process and being more observant of what they are spending.

Steve also discussed standardization of the Medicaid high cost fund. High cost fund is \$30,000 for a student, which can be reimbursed \$5,000 from Medicaid funds. The Panel discussed issues pertaining to families not wanting to use Medicaid reimbursements and other eligibility issues.

6. Special Education Monitoring with Karen Martens

Karen presented an update of the 2006-07 District Special Education Monitoring Performance Criteria for Special Education Outcomes.

District profiles were released in April 2006 without assigned levels. This fall the districts will receive their assigned levels. Karen presented handouts detailing the five Outcomes Standards for Determining Criteria Met/Not Met, Standard for Determining Local District Compliance Indicators, 2006-07 Standard for Determining District Level of Performance and 2006-07 Standard for District Determination.

The discussion included an overview of the process used to examine 2006-07 AEA Monitoring - Level of Performance Criteria. The process includes looking at:

- 4 Essential Questions
- Criteria Used to Inform AEA Determination;
- Data Used to Inform AEA Level of Performance and;
- Data Used to Inform AEA Determination.

7. Learning Supports with Jane Todey

Jane presented an overview of Iowa's Learning Supports system and initiatives. Iowa's work draws upon initiatives around the country that are rethinking how schools and communities meet the challenges of addressing persistent barriers to student learning. These initiatives reflect a fundamental commitment to a three-component framework for school improvement. The three components are the following: Academic Instruction, Leadership and Learning Supports.

Panel members asked questions regarding Part B and C monitoring, State Performance Plan and the rigorous targets. In general, OSEP feels that programs in each state are getting better because of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), IDEA '04 and the SPP.

8. National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards (NIMAS) with Steve Maurer

IDEA requires a new system for students who are visually impaired and students who are print disabled to receive their textbooks and core instructional materials in specialized formats at the same time as their non-disabled peers. NIMAS (National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards) establishes standards to be used by textbook publishers to prepare electronic files of textbooks, which can be converted to specialized formats. Specialized formats means Braille, Audio, Large Print, Text to Speech or Digital Text, which can be used by students who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, and reading disabled. The publishers of textbooks are required to transmit all textbooks and instructional core materials to NIMAS once they get direction from the school district. Steve disseminated a guideline, which outlines student eligibility requirements.

9. Highly Qualified Teacher with Norma Lynch:

Norma provided the Panel with an update on the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) issue. The presentation included reviewing Iowa's plan to implement the model, as well as activities to assist school districts in this endeavor.

Related Activities

This section references Panel work to both continue professional development of members in topics related to special education and the work of the Panel to perform its duties.

Panel members were invited to attend conferences and workshops held in Iowa that offered opportunities for them to learn about specific topics and areas related to special education. Expenses for travel, lodging and registrations were reimbursed. The conferences/workshops included the following:

- Second Annual High School Summit at the Polk County Convention Center
- Parent Education Connection Conference in Ames
- I-CASE in Des Moines
- OSEP Leadership Conference in Washington, DC

Members attending the conferences shared their experiences and highlighted lessons learned during the regular Panel meetings.

Needs Assessment Survey-Follow Up/Diane Moore

In order to continue to inform the Panel of state-sponsored initiatives, a survey was conducted asking staff of the Department of Education to write brief descriptions of their projects. The topics/details were then distributed to Panel members asking them to indicate the topics about which they would like more information. Personnel from the requested content areas will be invited to share information with the Panel.

SEAP Subcommittees

The Panel convened one subcommittee:

- Annual Report – this group reviewed, suggested improvements, and drafted the 2006 – 07 Annual Report for the Panel's approval.

Meeting Dates 2007 – 2008

Member Orientation:

Thursday, September 27	12:30pm – 7:00pm	TBA
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Regular Meetings:

Friday, September 28, 2007	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Friday, November 2, 2007	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Friday, December 7, 2007	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Friday, January 25, 2008	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Friday, April 25, 2008	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Friday, June 6, 2008	9:00am – 3:00pm	Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, IA
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Acronyms/Terms

AEA – Area Education Agency

ALJ - Administrative Law Judge

DE – Department of Education

District – school district (also referred to as Local Educational Agency or LEA)

HQT – Highly Qualified Teacher

IDEA, IDEA’04 or IDEA 2004 – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

IEP – Individualized Education Program

LEA – Local Educational Agency (also called school districts or districts)

Medicaid – Medicaid is a mix of state and federal funds for health services. In Iowa, Medicaid covers many of the health/behavior related services identified in a child's IEP/IFSP such as: Speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy, social worker services, school psychologist services, nursing, health/behavior paraprofessional services, transportation, audiology, and others.

NCLB – No Child Left Behind, a federal education law

NIMAS - National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards

OSEP – Office of Special Education Programs (Washington, D.C.)

Panel – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as “SEAP”)

Part B – Special Education Services for Children with Disabilities Ages 3 to 21

Part C - Services for Children Birth through Two Years

SEA – State Education Agency

SEAP – Special Education Advisory Panel (also referred to as the “Panel”)

SPP – Six-Year Performance Plan

Westat - an employee-owned research corporation centered in Rockville, Maryland. It serves most agencies of the United States Government as well as many other businesses, foundations, universities, and state and local governments.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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